

# Of Truth and Tingling

*by lady\_rhian*

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## Of Truth and Tingling

*Chapter 1 of 1*

Sometimes the truth hurts, but it never tingles.

There once was a girl with long, black hair and eyes the color of the sea. Her mother's belly was growing, and every night before bed she would ask, 'Mummy, where do babies come from?'

'Babies come from heaven,' her mother would say.

But Rowena's toes would tingle, and she knew her mother was not telling the whole truth.

\*

'You won't leave me, Salazar?' she asked as she wrapped the blankets tightly around them to ward off the castle's draft.

He put his hand on her growing belly and said, 'Never, my love.'

And she told herself that her toes were tingling because of the cold.

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'Mother, is Mr Godric my father?'

'No, my sweet.'

'Do I have a father?'

'No, my sweet.'

'Mother, my toes just tingled—what does that mean?'

\*

Helena lay in a snow-covered field stained with her blood, her breaths coming more shallow now, as he knelt over her and cradled her face with his hands. Tears dropped from his face to hers; the wet cold stung.

'I'm so sorry. I love you.'

For the first time in her life, she wished her toes would tingle.

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'Time to sleep, Jeannie.'

'Just one more story! Please, Mummy!'

'I suppose. Which would you like?'

'The one about how our toes tingle.'

'Has your Auntie Ruth been telling you tall tales again?'

'Auntie Ruthie says we can use it as a test to tell if people tell the truth.'

'Well, I love you. Did your toes tingle?'

'No. You're telling the truth!'

'Of course I am! You're my daughter. You don't need Auntie Ruth's silly toe tingling test to tell you that.'

\*

Jean told *her* little girl many bedtime stories, but she never told her about the tingling toes. Her Great Aunt Ruth (who was, admittedly, a bit of an old bat) had told her that story so many times that it had stuck, and Jean could never escape the feelings of disappointment when she learned that her boss had lied about a promotion, or that her brother had lied about moving back to London, or that her husband had lied about an affair.

'When will Daddy get back from his trip?'

'Soon, Hermione.'

'I miss Daddy.'

'I miss him, too.'

'Mummy, why do my toes feel funny?'

And Jean almost fell off her chair.

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Prompt: An improbable family legend is, surprisingly, based in fact.